

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ATHENS 03008 01 OF 02 111658Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----083991 111710Z /50

O R 111528Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5391
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 3008

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GR, TU, CY, US
SUBJECT: INITIAL CALL ON PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS

1. SUMMARY. IN MY MAIDEN CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER TODAY HETHANKED ME FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER; HELD THAT WE HAD MADE A "MISTAKE"WITH OUR ACTION TO LIFT THE TURKISH EMBARGO; CHARGED TURKEY WITH "BLACKMAIL"; SPECULATED THAT ANKARA WOULD PROVE UNREASONABLE WITH ITS PROPOSALS; MAINTAINED THAT GREECE HAD ALREADY MADE CONCESSIONS ON CYPRUS, AND CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS POLITICALLY ISOLATED IN SEEKING TO INTEGRATE GREECE INTO THE WEST. END SUMMARY:

2. AFTER CAREFULLY READING THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER AND EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION FOR RECEIVING IT, CARAMANLIS TURNED TO EXTENDED COMMENTARY ON THE PRESENT SITUATION AS A RESULT OF THE DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO TURKEY. ACKNOWLEDGING NO DESIRE TO DICTATE OUR POLICIES, HE COMPALINED THAT THE UNITED STATES COMMITTED A MISTAKE -- NOT OF INTENTION SO MUCH AS -- IN ASSESSING WHERE MATTERS STAND AND THE POSSIBLE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ATHENS 03008 01 OF 02 111658Z

CONSEQUENCES OF OUR DECISIONS. WHAT WE HAD DONE, HE SAID, WAS TO GIVE IN TO TURKISH "BLACKMAIL" BY PROPOSING THAT CONGRESS LIFT THE ARMS EMBARGO AND WE WERE THEREFORE BEING UNFAIR TO GREECE. HE ARGUED THATTURKEY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY PUT FORWARD UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS ON CYPRUS AND STILL SHE WOULD BE REWARDED BY THE LIFTING OF CONGRESSIONAL PENALTY FOR HER INVASION OF CYPRUS

IN 1974. CLAIMING THAT HE KNEW THE TURKS BETTER THAN WE DID, HE MADE THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE TURKISH PROPOSALS WOULD PROVE INADEQUATE AND CONSEQUENTLY THE CYPRUS IMPASSE WOULD REMAIN AS IT IS. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THE TURKISH PROPOSALS BEFORE REQUESTING ANY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION.

3. THE RESULT OF OUR DECISIONS, THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED, WAS TO HAVE TREATED GREECE UNJUSTLY. HE, PERSONALLY, AND MOST GREEKS, YEARNED FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND ATHENS. GREEKS WILL NOT PERCEIVE NOR ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT THAT THERE IS EQUIVALENCE IN THE U.S. DECISIONS. THE ONLY REWARDS ARE FOR TURKEY.

4. ON CYPRUS, HE SAID THAT GREECE HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED CONCESSIONS ON THE THREE ISSUES OF PRINCIPLE-- TERRITORY, CONSTITUTION, GOVERNMENT -- WHICH HE MAINTAINED WENT A LONG WAY TOWARD MEETING TURKISH DEMANDS. GREECE DID NOT, HE ADDED, DEMAND A RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE ON THE ISLAND. TURKEY MEANWHILE HAD REMAINED INTRANSIGENT AND INSATIABLE EVEN IN THE FACE OF GREEK CONCESSIONS. WHILE ADMITTING THAT NEITHER OF US HAD YET HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THE TURKISH PROPOSALS "EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE THREE YEARS OVERDUE." CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 03008 01 OF 02 111658Z

HE ALLOWED THAT THEY WOULD BEAR THE CLOSEST INSPECTION.

5. TURNING TO HIS POLITICAL SITUATION CARAMANLIS CONTENTED THAT HE WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY ISOLATED WITH HIS GOALS OF GREECE'S ENTRY INTO THE EC AND OF ITS REINTEGRATION INTO NATO. OUR ACTIONS HAVE AGGRAVATED HIS POSITION AND COULD FRUSTRATE HIS OBJECTIVES. THESE OBJECTIVES HE REMINDED ME HAD NOT ONLY BEEN A POLICY FOR HIM BUT A PERSONAL CONVICTION AND REPRESENT THE CHALLENGE THAT HAS KEPT HIM IN POLITICS WHEN AT TIMES HE HAS GIVEN THOUGHT TO THROWING IN HIS HAND AFTER 43 YEARS.

5. IN REPLY I ALLOWED THAT HONEST AND SERIOUS MEN MAY DIFFER OVER THEIR ASSESSMENTS OF A GIVEN SITUATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 3008

EXDIS

I WANTED TO EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESIDENT AGONIZED OVER HIS DECISIONS AND DID NOT ARRIVE AT THEM LIGHTLY. HIS REASONS WERE CONTAINED IN HIS LETTER. IT WOULD BE AN ABUSE OF REASONING TO CHARACTERIZE THEM AS MERELY ANTI-GREEK. OUR RELATIONSHIP WARRANTED BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND THAT NARROW-MINDEDNESS WAS IN NO ONE'S INTEREST. I URGED AN OPEN-MINDED ATTITUDE AND PATIENCE IN THE PERIOD AHEAD AND CAUTIONED AGAINST ANY SUMMARY REJECTION OF TURKISH PROPOSALS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY WERE "UNACCEPTABLE". WHAT WAS NEEDED WERE PROPOSALS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE COMMUNITIES TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS, AND NEITHER SIDE SHOULD EXPECT - MUCH LESS DEMAND - THAT THEIR MAXIMUM CONDITIONS BE MET. I SAID THAT HOWEVER HE CHARACTERIZED TURKISH BEHAVIOR HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT SURRENDER TO "BLACKMAIL" IN THE CASE OF ANY COUNTRY.

7. COMMENT: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE RECENT DECISIONS, THE CONVERSATION WAS VIRTUALLY A SET PIECE. THE SUBSTANCE OF IT WILL BE FAMILIAR TO THOSE WHO HAVE FOLLOWED THESE
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 03008 02 OF 02 111636Z

AFFAIRS LONGER THAN THIS SOURCE. INDEED, I HAD THE BENEFIT OF THE MAIN LINES WHEN SENATOR JAVITS WAS HERE LAST WEEK. IT IS NOTEWORTHY, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WAS LITTLE EMOTION DISPLAYED AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, NO THREATS OF ANTI-AMERICAN ACTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT OR ANYTHING ELSE INTIMIDATING. ON THE WHOLE THE ATMOSPHERE WAS CORDIAL, INCLUDING PERSONAL

COURTESIES BEFORE AND AT THE END OF OUR MEETING.
ON LEAVING WE BOTH AGREED WE WILL DOUBTLESSLY
SEE A GREAT DEAL OF ONE ANOTHER DURING THE PERIOD AHEAD.
MCCLOSKEY

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